

Message Text

PAGE 01 PHNOM 09305 050014Z

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ACTION SS-25

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CINCPAC

COMUSSAG NKP

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 9305

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJ: COMUSSAG REVIEWS CAMBODIAN MILITARY SITUATION
WITH THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL

DEPT ALSO PASS ACTION SECDEF AND CJCS

1. IN THE COURSE OF A FAREWELL VISIT TO AMBASSADOR SWANK, GENERAL VOGT CALLED ON PRESIDENT LON NOL AND THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL SEPTEMBER 3. FANK COMMANDER IN CHIEF MAJGEN SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AND DEFENSE MINISTER MAJGEN U SAY WERE ALSO PRESENT. AMBASSADOR, ENDERS, AND CHMEDTC TOOK PART ON THE U.S. SIDE.

2. GENERAL VOGT LED OFF BY CONGRATULATING THE KHMER ON THE FANK'S GOOD PERFORMANCE SINCE AUGUST 15, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO FAITHFUL EXECUTION OF THE GENERAL STAFF PLAN FOR THE DEFENSE OF PHNOM PENH AND EFFECTIVE USE OF ARTILLERY. THE ENEMY HAD THOUGHT THEY COULD WALK INTO PHNOM PENH WHEN U.S. BOMBING STOPPED. INSTEAD THEY FOUND FANK WELL PREPARED AND READY FOR THEM, AND HAD ALREADY SUFFERED A MAJOR MILITARY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEFEAT.

3. REGARDING FUTURE ENEMY INTENTIONS AROUND PHNOM PENH, GENERAL VOGT PREDICTED INCREASED ACTIVITY IN VIHEAR SUOR
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PAGE 02 PHNOM 09305 050014Z

AREA, PROBES INTO THE AS YET INCOMPLETELY SECURED TRANS-BASSAC ZONE, AND A CONCERTED ATTEMPT TO TAKE KOMPONG SPEU AND COME WEST UP ROUTE 4 TOWARDS POCHENTONG. HE SAID HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE FANK HAD THE MEANS AND

THE WILL TO DEFEAT THESE ATTACKS. HE UNDERLINED, HOWEVER, THE IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING THE PRIORITIES AND DISPOSITIONS OF THE GENERAL STAFF PLAN FOR PHNOM PENH'S DEFENSE.

4. REGARDING KOMPONG CHAM, GNERAL VOGT POINTED OUT THAT THE ENEMY HAD STRIPPED HIS GARRISONS AROUND KOMPONG THOM, KOMPONG CHHNANG, SIEM REAP, AND INDEED THE ENTIRE NORTHERN REGION TO MASS ITS UNITS FOR THE CURRENT BATTLE. THE ENEMY WAS THUS VULNERABLE TO DIVERSIONARY ACTIONS, AND MIGHT RESPOND TO IT BY PULLING UNITS OFF CHAM. GENERAL VOGT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WITH THE SUBSTANTIAL REINFORCEMENTS AND ADDITIONAL FIRE POWER FANK HAS PUT INTO KOMPONG CHAM, A STRONG OPERATIONS OFFICER IS NEEDED THERE. (COMMENT: LATER IN THE DAY SOSTHENE INFORMED US THAT HE WAS SENDING FANKG-3 COLONEL UK SAUV, AN EXPERIENCED AND ABLE COORDINATOR, UP TO KOMPONG CHAM TO SERVE AS MAJGEN SAR HOR'S OPERATIONS DEPUTY.)

5. TURNING TO THE FUTURE, GENERAL VOGT EXPRESSED HIS CONFIDENCE THAT THE GKR WOULD COME THROUGH THE WET SEASON IN GOOD ORDER. BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE READY TO FACE A RENEWD LARGE-SCALE ENEMY OFFENSIVE IN THE DRUY SEASON. THERE ARE A GREAT MANY ACTIONS THAT MUST BE TAKEN BETWEEN NOW AND THEN TO GET PREPARED FOR THAT OFFENSIVE, BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THEM IS TO FILL OUT FANK UNITS. GENERAL VOGT SAID THAT FILLING UP AND RECONSTITUTING ITS FORCES WOULD BE THE ENEMY'S MAIN FOCUS BETWEEN NOW AND THE DRY SEASON, AND THAT IN THE END THE SIDE THATIS MOST EFFECTIVE IN THIS MANPOWER AND TRAINING EFFORT WILL PREVAIL. HE ADDED THAT ON THE GKR SIDE SOME MIX OF CONSCRIPTION AND VOLUNTARY RECRUTIMENT, THE ONE REINFORCING THE OTHER, APPEARS TO BE INDISPENSABLE TO GET THE MANPOWER NEEDED.

6. REGARDING NVA/VC FORCES IN HE COUNRY, GENERAL VOGT SAID THAT WHILE HE KNEW OF NO SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURES, THE CAMBODIANS COULD EXPECT THESE FORCES TO BE MORE AND SECRET

PAGE 03 PHNOM 09305 050014Z

MORE CONCERNED WITH WHAT PROMISES TO BE A RISING LEVEL OF MILITARY ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM OVER THE COMING MONTHS. HE CAUTIONED THE KHMER NOT TO EXPECT SIGNIFI- CANT MILITARY AID FROM THE RVNAF, BUT NOTED THAT THEY ARE MAKING A SUBSTANTIAL INDIRECT CONTRIBUTION TO CAMBODIA'S SECURITY BY OCCUPYING NVA/VC UNITS.

7. GENERAL VOGT PREDICTED THAT WITH THE END OF THE BOMBING AND WITH FANK'S CONTINUED DEMONSTRATION OF ITS ABILITY TO HOLD U.S. PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CAMBODIA'S STRUGGLE WOULD INCREASE. THEE ALREADY ARE SEVERAL INDICATIONS OF THIS, NOTABLY IN THE ATTITUDES TAKEN BY RECENT CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS TO PHNOM PENH. GENERAL

VOGT REITERATED THAT CAMBODIA WOULD RECEIVE THE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IT REQUIRES AND CAN EFFECTIVELY USE. HE ALSO REVIEWED USAF WITHDRAWALS FROM THAILAND NOW UNDERWAY AND ASSURED THE KHMER THAT HE RETAINED CAPABILITY TO RESUME AIR OPERATIONS IF DIRECTED TO DO SO.

8. COMMENT: GENERAL VOGT DID MOST OF THE TALKING AND THIS WAS JUST AS WELL. BUT AS SUBSEQUENT EXCHANGES DURING THE DAY DISCLOSED, KHMER MORALE, INCLUDING THAT OF THE HIGH POLITICAL COUNCIL AND THE SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE EMG, IS GOOD, AND GENERAL VOGT RECEIVED HIS USUAL ATTENTIVE, CAREFUL HEARING. SWANK

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